Prayers for the Nursery

DIOCESE OF NEWARK

A PRAYER FOR A MARRIED COUPLE

O God, our heavenly Father, protect and bless us. Deepen and strengthen our love for each other day by day. Grant that by Thy mercy, neither of us ever say one unkind word to the other. Forgive and correct our faults, and make us instantly to forgive each other, should one of us unconsciously hurt the other. Make us and keep us sound and well in body, alert in mind, tender in heart, devout in spirit. O Lord, grant us each to rise to the other's best. Then we pray Thee add to our common life virtue as only Thou canst give; and so, O Father, consecrate our life and our love completely to Thy worship and to the service of all about us, especially those whom Thou hast appointed us to serve, that we may always stand before Thee in happiness and peace: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Bishop Charles L. Slattery

PRAYERS FOR THE NURSERY

INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet is issued in the hope that parents of the nursery age members of our Parish family may have some help in the religious training of their children in the home.

It is never too early to start the spiritual growth of a child. As a matter of fact parents contemplating the birth of a child should be carrying to God in prayer their hopes, ambitions, aspirations, and love for the child that is to be theirs. This can be done quite simply. If parents once realize that in the great experience of parenthood they are entering into a new fellowship with God the Father, "by whom all things are made," then it is perfectly natural that together and singly they should, quite simply, talk to God about this. Only in this way can the birth of the baby be transfigured to deepen and enrich the spiritual lives of the parents.

Then the child comes. A good rule to follow is this: Never let a child be able to remember a time when there were no prayers said for and with him. Long before he can speak his parents may say prayers at his crib. Of course he

won't understand them, but it was the interesting experience of one set of parents, who had always prayed together by their child's bed, to hear the first words that the child tried to say, after the usual expressions for Mother and Father, were the name of Jesus and Amen—a direct result of a regular daily practice which had made an impression in the spiritual development of this very young child.

Remember, the home has the first and last chance with the child. Most of the religion a very young child gains comes from the atmosphere of the home. If there is no spiritual nourishment, one cannot expect it to be artificially stimulated at Church School. When a home is filled with love and joy, sacrificial service, unselfishness and reverence, religion will grow naturally.

When a child is old enough to walk about he can be taught to kneel at his bed or at a low table. Parents should kneel with the child, rather than have the child kneel at his mother's knee, for the prayers should be a family act. Perhaps it will be possible to have a special corner in his room where there will be a religious picture such as a Christmas card with a Madonna on it, or a bas-relief, and perhaps a cross with candles beside it. Let him furnish, arrange and care for his own corner. If the parents are wise they will gather there the family group and add their own prayers to those they teach the child.

Moreover, although definite prayers are suggested herein, a child should not depend upon "set prayers" but, gradually as he grows older, he should be led more and more to express himself in his own way, no matter how

hesitant or simple it is. If he finds expressions of love, thankfulness, a corrective attitude when he does wrong, and a concern for others in his home life, these things will find a natural place in his prayers.

Many two year olds are taught to say "thank you" when they receive a cookie, or when helped with a toy or when any small favor is done for them,—so prayers of thankfulness may be the first which are expressed and understood at this age. "Thank you, God, for this sunny day,"—this prayer may be varied so that each night the child expresses his gratitude for whatever is chiefly in his mind as a summary of his day. Praise to God may be expressed in the Grace,

"God is great and God is good,
And we thank Him for our food."

Intercession has been taught in the bedtime prayers of "God bless Daddy, God bless Mother." When prayers of confession and petition are added, these five elements form the basis of all prayers for both young and old.

As the child grows older, he will be brought to the Church where in the companionship of other children and his parents he will gather up into a concrete form the religious life of his home and begin to feel the purpose and the beauty of God's great family into which he has been received through Holy Baptism. Let him be told that. Let him feel that he belongs not only in the home and in the community, but in the Church, and to Christ as the Head of a greater family. Only in this way can a child grow naturally as did our Lord "in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man."

PRAYERS FOR PARENTS AT THE BABY'S BEDSIDE

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

O God our Father, we thank Thee for giving us our child to take care of in Thy Name. Help us that we may never by word or deed make it harder for *him* to be good. Help us to show *him* that all people are members of Thy family. Keep *him* strong in soul and mind and body. Make *him* pure, and kind, and true, that he may grow up to give Thee pleasure all his life long: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God our heavenly Father, who has blessed us with the joy and care of children; Give us light and strength so to train them, that they may love whatsoever things are true, and pure, and lovely, and of good report: following the example of their Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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Almighty God, give us grace to trust to Thy never-failing care and love those who are dear to us, for this life and the life to come; knowing that Thou art doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

•

Watch over thy child, O Lord, as *his* days increase; bless and guide *him* wherever *he* may be, keeping *him* unspotted from the world. Strengthen *him* when *he* stands; comfort *him* when discouraged or sorrowful; raise *him* up if *he* fall; and in *his* heart may thy peace which passeth understanding abide all the days of *his* life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A CHILD'S PRAYERS WHEN GETTING UP

●

O Jesus, I love Thee. *Amen.*

●

Dear Lord Jesus, Help me to act and speak to
all persons as members of Thy family. *Amen.*

●

Holy Jesus, hear my prayer,
Keep me in Thy loving care. *Amen.*

●

Two little eyes to look to God,
Two little ears to hear His word,
Two little feet to walk His ways,
Hands to serve Him all the days.
One little tongue to speak His truth,
One little heart for Him in youth,
Take them, O Jesus, let them be
Always willing and true to Thee. *Amen.*

Jesus, tender Shepherd,
Hear me when I pray;
Guide and keep me safely,
Through the coming day. *Amen.*

●

I thank Thee Father, for this day,
For all the joys along the way;
I thank Thee for the morning light,
And for Thy watchful care till night. *Amen.*

●

Father, I thank Thee for Thy care:
Thou art with me everywhere,
Keep Thy little child, I pray,
Happy, good and true today. *Amen.*

●

Jesus, Friend of little children
Be a Friend to me;
Take my hand and ever keep me
Always close to Thee. *Amen.*

A CHILD'S PRAYERS ON GOING TO BED

●

God bless us, everyone. *Amen.*

●

Dear Jesus, bless my Mother and Father and help me to be like Jesus. *Amen.*

(*Here add prayers for those outside the family, such as your Rector, Bishop, other children, relatives, friends, and those who in any way serve the family life.*)

●

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, Thy child to keep
Thy love be with me through the night,
And wake me with the morning light. *Amen.*

●

Before I lay me down to rest
I sign Christ's cross ✝ upon my breast. *Amen.*

I thank Thee, O God, for taking care of me this day, and bringing me safe to bedtime. Watch over me this night, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

•

Lord Jesus, Make me sorry for what I have done wrong today and grant me Thy forgiveness. *Amen.*

•

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for all you have given me today. Help me to do my part by being good and helpful. *Amen.*

•

God, our Father, bless all children,
Keep them in thy tender care,
May they know thee, love thee, serve thee,
All thy children everywhere. Amen.

GRACE AT MEALS

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God bless this food and make us good. *Amen.*

•

Father, bless the food we take and bless us all for
Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

•

God is great and God is good
And we thank Him for this food. *Amen.*

•

Dear heavenly Father, bless this food and help me to
remember others and to share with them. *Amen.*

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